

# CHAPTER 5

## INDIANA AVENUE CORRIDOR

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### 1. STUDY AREA

The Indiana Avenue Target Area includes the north side of Indiana Avenue from Van Buren Boulevard to Harrison Street and the north and south sides of the street from Van Buren Boulevard to Gibson Street (see Figure 32).

### 2. ISSUES

The Existing Conditions and Issues report identifies the major issues in this area as:

- a. Noise and Traffic:* The target area is impacted by noise from the adjacent Riverside Freeway and, to a lesser extent, the nearby BNSF railroad.
- b. Transition of Land Uses:* The area is largely planned for Industrial Business Park uses by the General Plan. The implementation of this land use designation would be problematical, given the shallow depths and small sizes of the parcels on the north side of the street.
- c. Shallow Lot Depths:* All of the parcels in this target area are hampered by shallow depths.
- d. Lot Consolidation:* The existing small residential lots will be a major constraint in transitioning the area from residential to industrial and office uses.

### 3. ANALYSIS AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

#### *a. Noise and Traffic:*

While noise is a concern for many land uses, the proximity of traffic and railroad noise is usually only considered an issue in residential areas. Office and industrial uses are typically daytime uses and are not as affected by traffic noise. Windows and doors can be oriented toward a noise source with less of an adverse impact to occupants than would be the case with residential uses. Inasmuch as there are no planned residential uses in the Indiana Avenue Corridor area, this issue was not significantly pursued.

Traffic, on the other hand, is an important concern for the Indiana Avenue Corridor. With the large number of small parcels lining the street, multiple driveway cuts could slow traffic

FIGURE 32  
INDIANA AVENUE CORRIDOR

and cause accidents. Establishing a minimum project size and consolidating driveways to the extent possible would help.

***b. Transition of Land Uses:***

The Indiana Corridor area is largely planned for Industrial Business Park uses (see Figure 33). The only exceptions are the corner uses at Indiana Avenue and Van Buren Boulevard, where properties are zoned and planned for commercial uses. The predominant Industrial Business Park designation calls for high quality business and industrial uses. Zones that would likely implement this designation would be the RO - Restricted Office and the MP - Manufacturing Park zones. Most of the parcels in this area are zoned R-1-65 (Figure 34), and would be expected to change to MP or RO zoning to implement the Industrial Business Park General Plan designation. The south side of Indiana Avenue is largely zoned M1 - Light Industrial, however, most of the existing uses are residential. A gasoline station at the corner is planned and zoned for commercial uses, and a few parcels are vacant. The main concern is the feasibility of these residential properties to transition to high quality industrial uses. The MP zone's 40,000 square foot minimum lot size and its setbacks of 40 to 50 feet in the front and 20 feet in the sides and rear are definitely not conducive to development on the very shallow parcels in this area. The only component of the Industrial Business Park land use that would readily work with these lots is the office component, implemented by RO - Restricted Office zoning.

***c. Shallow Lot Depths:***

On the north side of the street, west of Van Buren Boulevard, lots range from about 135 to 150 feet deep. East of Van Buren Boulevard, lots on the north side are much shallower, ranging from about 89 to 104 feet deep. On the south side, lots range from as little as 60, up to about 138 feet in depth. Further constraining the depths of the lots in this area is Indiana Avenue's planned 88 foot wide Major Arterial width. For the most part, right-of-way is presently at 40 feet from centerline, meaning most properties will need to give up an additional 4 feet of right-of-way as development occurs. Properties along the remainder of the street are already dedicated to a full 44 feet from center line. East of Van Buren Boulevard, the street is developed as a two-lane street. West of Van Buren Boulevard it is a minimal four-lane street.

Four alternative solutions may be considered for Indiana Avenue's land use and shallow lot concerns:

Alternative A: One solution would be to develop an overlay zone that has lower standards. The overlay zone could include provisions for fewer parking spaces, shallower setbacks, and reduced landscaping. Accomplishing this would involve preparation of a zoning ordinance text amendment and the eventual application of the overlay zone to individual properties through the public hearing process.

FIGURE 33  
GENERAL PLAN

FIGURE 34  
ZONING

Alternative B: An alternative to the overlay zone idea would be to change the General Plan on the north and south sides of Indiana Avenue from Industrial Business Park to Low Rise Office. Low Rise Office would be implemented with RO - Restricted Office zoning. While the Industrial Business Park land use designation could be implemented solely with RO zoning, redesignating this area for Low Rise Office would leave little doubt as to the City's intention for these problem parcels. Instead of the MP zone's 50 foot front, and 20 foot side and rear setbacks, the RO zone would only require a 15-foot front setback, and side and rear setbacks of five and 10 feet respectively. Office development could also feasibly take place on parcels much smaller than the 40,000 square feet required by the MP zone.

Alternative C: A third approach would be to retain the Industrial Business Park designation, but amend the MP zone, as it applies to this area, to allow smaller parcels and shallower setbacks than the MP zone would normally require. This approach has some significant advantages over the other two approaches. First, this approach avoids the need for a General Plan amendment. Second, like Alternative B, it avoids the need for creating, processing and administering a separate overlay zone. The application of the reduced parcel size and setbacks could simply be processed as a code text amendment, referencing the Indiana Avenue Corridor as a location where lesser standards would apply. Third, it would allow for a much broader range of uses than the Low Density Office designation/RO zone as called for in Alternative C. Implementing the Industrial Business Park land use designation with modified standards under an MP zone would allow a range of uses that could include office, light manufacturing, warehousing and related uses. Property owners wishing to opt for the RO zone would still have that opportunity under the Industrial Business Park land use designation.

In conjunction with all of the above alternatives it would also be possible to reduce the required Indiana Avenue right-of-way dedication. To achieve the General Plan's 88 foot wide Major Arterial standard for Indiana Avenue, the City would typically require the dedication of 44 feet of right-of-way on each side of the street as a condition of rezoning requests or building permits. Along most of Indiana Avenue's frontages in the study area, right-of-way is at 80 feet. Some areas are already dedicated to the full 88 feet. It would not be advisable to reduce the curb separation on this relatively small section of Indiana Avenue, so any reduction in right-of-way should come from the parkway/sidewalk area. If the parkway was reduced by four feet, a small amount of additional land would be available for development. This would leave the curb-to-curb distance consistent and only effect the area normally assigned for utilities, street trees and parkway landscaping. Utilities and street trees could be placed in an easement. This approach would be very beneficial to the very shallow parcels on the north and south sides of Indiana Avenue east of Van Buren Boulevard. West of Van Buren Boulevard, the special cross section should not be necessary (see Figure 35).

FIGURE 35  
EXISTING AND PROPOSED INDIANA AVE CROSS SECTIONS

**d. Lot Consolidation:**

The residential lots on the north side of Indiana Avenue are in the range of 6,000 to 9,500 square feet. On the south side, parcels range from 4,356 square feet to 23,522 square feet. Most parcels on both sides of the street are occupied by single family residences. While the RO zone allows development on parcels as small as 8,000 square feet, the City's general guideline for transitioning from residential to office zoning is 20,000 square feet. If this were applied to the Indiana Avenue corridor, it would generally take three to four lots to achieve the minimum project size. A more reasonable standard for this area would be 18,000 square feet. With an 18,000 square foot standard, it would take two typical lots west of Van Buren Boulevard to create an office project. East of Van Buren Boulevard, it would take three typical lots to create a project. Applying this modified standard would result in reasonable, developable sites and viable office/industrial projects. It would also be beneficial to require the removal of all residential structures on properties for zoning approval.

#### **4. ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY**

The recommended alternative from the above choices is Alternative C. To test the feasibility of this approach, economist Douglas Ford tested two development scenarios that would take full advantage of the reduced standards of Alternative C. The two scenarios are as follows:

*Plan One, West of Van Buren Boulevard* (Figure 36) is a 5,890 square foot industrial/office structure sited on a 18,850 square foot lot, with 22 parking spaces. The site is assembled by combining two existing 65 x 145 foot single family lots.

*Plan Two, East of Van Buren Boulevard* (Figure 37) combines three 65 x 95 foot single family lots to create a parcel of 18,525 square feet supporting a 5,600 square foot office/industrial building with 19 parking spaces.

The consultant did a two-stage analysis. First he developed a projection for current market rentals achievable along Indiana Avenue. Second, he developed pro-formas for the two site alternatives, indicating the rental levels and valuations necessary to support project feasibility. This allowed him to determine under which conditions a transition from residential to industrial/office could economically occur, and the feasible timing of such a transition. The consultant looked at rental rates, land acquisition costs, direct construction costs, site improvement costs, demolition expenses, fees, financing and profit. Table 16 shows all of the development costs associated with the two plans. The following is a summary of the rental discrepancy between what would be needed for a feasible project, versus what can be achieved in today's market.

	<b><u>Current Market Rent</u></b>	<b><u>Required Rent</u></b>	<b><u>Difference</u></b>
Plan 1 - West	\$0.75/Square Foot	\$0.91/Square Foot	(\$0.16/Square Foot)
Plan 2 - East	\$0.65/Square Foot	\$1.03/Square Foot	(\$0.43/Square Foot)



TABLE 16

FIGURE 36  
DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE ONE

FIGURE 37  
DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE TWO

Both scenarios show feasibility shortfalls under present market conditions and fee assumptions. The feasibility shortfall widens east of Van Buren, and is sensitive to specific site acquisition costs.

The consultant's report indicated that part of the problem in economically developing the prototype sites is City fees. Fees for the two sites were calculated at \$50,126 (\$8.51/Square Foot) for Plan One and \$52,957 (\$9.46/Square Foot) for Plan Two. The consultant's report observed these fees are higher than normal for developments of the size examined. Of particular concern are the fixed charges which are harder to absorb with a smaller project. Table 17 shows how the two scenarios could be made more feasible through a reduction in fees to \$6.00/Square Foot.

The consultant concludes that the combination of depressed rental rates and somewhat high city fees make development of the properties in the Indiana Corridor infeasible by today's standards. As the real estate market improves development of the properties in this area will become feasible. The time horizon for this would be about ten years. A revised City fee structure might speed this up, however, it is important that development "pay its own way," so changes for the sole purpose of "jump starting" development would not be advisable. Feasible development types would be a mix of commercial showroom, office, and industrial uses.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

It does not appear that the Indiana Avenue corridor needs complex or involved standards, guidelines or regulations to develop in an acceptable manner. The "bigger picture" issues in this area can be addressed with conventional zoning and general plan tools. These would include parcel size and setback reductions for Indiana Avenue properties transitioning from residential to industrial /office uses, and reduced right-of-way takes for the very shallow parcels east of Van Buren Boulevard. The land on the south side of Indiana Avenue, east of Van Buren Boulevard should probably be rezoned from the M-1 to the MP zone to be consistent with the Industrial Business Park General Plan designation and to take advantage of the reduced parcel size and setback standards proposed for the MP zone. Detailed considerations of site design, landscaping and architecture should be left to the Design Review process. Economic feasibility appears to be on the reasonably near-term horizon, as the economy improves. Changes to City fees, consistent with the concept of development paying for its self-generated impacts, might allow earlier development.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Amend the MP zone to provide for development on reduced size parcels, using the following standards and requirements:
  - a. Reduce the front, side and rear yard setbacks to 15 feet, including MP projects adjacent to residentially zoned properties.
  - b. Require buildings to be placed at the front setback line.
  - c. Reduce the minimum parcel size to 18,000 square feet for Industrial Business Park planned properties.

TABLE 17

- d. Require shared parking and access agreements and a minimum spacing between driveways of 150 feet.
  - e. Require the removal of all residential structures as a condition of rezoning property from a residential to a non-residential zone.
- 2. Establish a Planned Street Line to reduce the parkway width for Industrial Business Park planned properties east of Van Buren Boulevard from six feet to two feet.
- 3. Initiate a rezoning for the M-1 zoned parcels on the south side of the Indiana Avenue, east of Van Buren Boulevard, to place them in the MP zone.
- 4. Reexamine City fee structures to see if reductions are possible, consistent with the concept of development paying for its own impact costs.